

VZCZCXRO7787
RR RUEHDBU
DE RUEHBUL #3135/01 1941116
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 131116Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1334
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/COMSOCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6146
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5/UNMA//
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 003135

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A, S/CRS, SCA/PAB,
S/CT, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR BREZINSKI
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76 POLAD
TREASURY FOR D/S KIMMITT, APARAMESWARAN, AJEWELL
REL NATO/ISAF/AS/NZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/21/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: DISSATISFACTION IN THE PROVINCES

REF: KABUL 3088

KABUL 00003135 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: POL COUNSELOR ANGUS SIMMONS FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: : On 10 July, Poloff met with Arif Khan, a member of the Paktika Provincial Council who has been in Kabul trying to meet with GOA officials to express his concerns over poor governance, corruption and deteriorating security in Paktika. His efforts to have government meetings had been unsuccessful, and he finally turned to the Embassy in order to try to get his message to the GOA. Arif Khan's message is an increasingly common one, and merits attention insofar as it illustrates the difficulties that Afghans have in accessing the bureaucracy and decision makers in the capital. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Poloff was approached by Arif Khan, an elected Pashtun member of the Paktika Provincial Council who had become totally frustrated over his unsuccessful attempts to meet with Afghan policy makers and/or almost anyone in the Palace in order to present a report on conditions in Paktika Province. Arif Khan gives every impression of being a serious and concerned council member, and has the political distinction of having been elected from Paktika to represent the province in both the Emergency (2002) and Constitutional (2003-4) Loya Jirgas held in Kabul. Arif Khan claimed to be representing a large number of Paktika local leaders in his complaints about the deteriorating situation, and was visibly unhappy that he had not been able to gain access to any Kabul officials to state their case. His main requests of Poloff were to listen to his story, and to try to bring a letter he presented to Poloff to the attention of officials at the Palace.

13. (C) Arif Khan,s presentation was dignified and succinct. He claimed that the new governor of Paktika (Gov. Khpelwak) was young, inexperienced and corrupt, and was misusing the province,s meager 8 million Afghani operational budget. The former Director of Customs of Paktika, Haji Mohammad, had ostensibly been removed from office, but in reality had been unofficially allowed to set up a number of toll stations to collect fees, despite his former affiliation with Gulbeddin Hekmetyar, his murder record (he had allegedly killed 13 people, including his own wife), and an ongoing investigation being conducted against him by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. The Police Commander and the Border Police Commander were new and inexperienced, and according to Arif Khan, the Police Commander was turning over weapons to Taliban and Hekmetyar-affiliated groups. The people feel cut off from Kabul and the central government. Since his accession to power in late 2001, President Karzai has apparently made only one brief visit to Paktika.

14. (C) Arif Khan,s request was a simple one. He asked Poloff to transmit his letter) signed by several members of the Paktika leadership) to the National Security Council at the Palace and to any member of the Karzai family who might be able to bring it to the President,s attention. He said that he hoped the National Security Council would be embarrassed by the fact that while they had no time to see him, busy officers from the American Embassy had received him and given him their valuable time. The text of the letter (translated from Pashtu) is as follows:

Begin text:

To the high-ranking officials and armed forces officials of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

KABUL 00003135 002.2 OF 003

- Paktika Province is one of the poorest and most unfortunate provinces in Afghanistan. The people of this province are not only the victims of poverty,terrorism and extremism, but also victims of the person from whom they have great expectations to be saved. He himself deteriorates the situation and creates tensions in the province. This person is the Governor of Paktika, Mr. Khpelwak, who has started a movement that will put the province more in isolation from the government and will cause the people to lose trust and confidence more and more. The governor doesn't know how to communicate well with the local people to understand their needs. He gives no value to what people tell him. The only thing he values is money. He has carelessly and skillfully started to collect money from the people.

- He has started the general money collecting campaign under the name of reconstruction and does it under the leadership of a person by the name of Mohammad, who is the symbol of being a warlord, a murderer and a thief in the province. Using his gun power and influence, Mohammad was previously the head of customs in the province. He was fired from his position by a verbal order from the President. Currently Mohammad is leading the mentioned reconstruction campaign and takes large sums of money unofficially from poor drivers who cannot afford it. He takes money from drivers using gun power and then he shares the money with the governor.

- Thousands of people launched demonstrations in Paktika Province against him and his actions, but no one heard their voices. The illegal checkpoints/tolls still exist in the province, causing people a lot of trouble.

- The governor was not satisfied with what he was making and has created a new trap in order to collect money under the name of a so called "Master Plan" (reconstruction program) which completely violates the laws, principles and government regulations. The governor changed the initial rate of the land which was determined by the Cabinet at 50 Afghanis to

120 Afghanis. This happened based on the governor's dealing with this issue. The governor doesn't have the authority to do so. He has also distributed pieces of land which are possessed by the government called "Salami 100" to a few of his associates, those who have shared interests with him.

- After the governor's arrival, he started illegal and negative appointments and switching jobs from one person to another. He is changing the district governors and police chiefs. As a result of his recent actions, one after the other the districts may/will fall under the control of the enemy. The district managers and police chiefs run away from their offices and leave the districts without any resistance to the Taliban. They are making obvious deals with the Taliban, and in some places it looks like Taliban territory. For example, Doncky district,s police chief left the district to the enemy. The reason for losing government control over these districts is the result of appointing bad and defamed people who are good friends with the enemy. Insulting and scolding the elders is an ordinary occurrence. The Governor doubts the consultation and advice of the elders in the province.

- Therefore, we request the officials to pay serious attention to these cases,prevent Paktika Province from being defeated by the enemy and save it from its current crisis.

Note: Signatures and fingerprints of local elders are affixed to the letter, and it is noted that Zafar Khan Selaiman Kheil, Acting Head of the Paktika Provincial Council, clears

KABUL 00003135 003.2 OF 003

on the text.

End text

COMMENT

15. (C) Comment: Although it is impossible to judge the truth of his claims in this particular case, Arif Khan,s general description of security problems, government incompetence, official corruption, and the gap (illustrated all too well by his travails in Kabul) between government and &the people8 are repeated over and over in conversations and meetings with Afghans in Kabul, from street level to the offices of even high-ranking government officials. Security and corruption issues were the main complaint voiced in both Loya Jirgas, and are a growing daily refrain in the halls of today,s Parliament, the media and in homes all over Kabul.

16. (C) In traditional Afghan culture, the concept of making appointments to see officials is an alien one, and tribal representatives are accustomed to simply walk into meetings, sit down, sip tea and voice their concerns directly, so one can sympathize with harried Palace bureaucrats who are faced with incessant demands on their and the President,s time and attention. The level of complaint about the gap between the government and people like Arif Khan seems to be increasing day by day, however, and erodes popular confidence in the government,s ability or even willingness to address popular concerns. This is especially true when governors and police chiefs are simply appointed by the Palace and/or Ministry of Interior without reference to provincial wishes, thus forcing local residents to try to make their complaints heard in Kabul if they want to effect a change.

17. (C) Any trip from distant towns to Kabul entails great expense, the necessity of bribery, weeks of wasted time and an increase in frustration. It is extraordinarily difficult for people from the provinces to make themselves heard in Kabul, and dissatisfaction over the ensuing gap in communication is being noted more and more frequently by officials, parliamentarians, advisors and provincial emissaries who feel they are being ignored or frozen out by the Palace in Kabul. Per Reftel, it appears President Karzai

now realizes that outreach and strategic communications need to play a greater part in GOA efforts to restore public confidence and defeat the insurgency; moving urgently to put effective mechanisms in place is the immediate order of business. End comment.

NORLAND